

RECEIVED

APR 1 1996

Ellen Shaw Agress
Vice President
Legal Policy and Planning



FCC MAIL ROOM

March 26, 1996

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

William F. Caton
Acting Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Ex Parte Presentation in MM Docket No. 93-48

Dear Mr. Caton

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, the enclosed materials relating to the above-referenced Docket, transmitted by substantially identical cover letters, were sent ex parte to Mr. Blair Levin, Chief of Staff to Chairman Reed Hundt on March 21, 1996, and to Ms. Jane Mago, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Chong, Ms. Maureen O'Connell, Legal Advisor to Commissioner Quello, Mr. James Casserly, Senior Legal Advisor to Commissioner Ness, and Ms. Lisa Smith, Senior Legal Advisor to Commissioner Barrett on March 26, 1996.

These materials reiterate arguments contained in NBC's previous filings in this proceeding.

Respectfully yours,

Ellen Shaw Agress

No. of Copies rec'd
List ABCDE

021



RECEIVED

APR 1 1996

FCC MAIL ROOM

March 26, 1996

Ms. Jane Mago
Legal Advisor to Commissioner Rachelle Chong
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Jane:

I thought you might be interested in the attached description of a workshop held earlier this month for the writers and producers of the NBC teen block programs that are produced on the West Coast ("Saved by the Bell" and "Hang Time"; production of "California Dreams" for the 1996-97 season was completed earlier this year). NBC sponsored the workshop, which was organized by Dr. Karen Hill-Scott, the educational consultant who works with the shows. In addition to the creative teams from each show, the session was attended by NBC programming and research executives, and by two high school principals from the Los Angeles area. The goal of this highly successful event was to provide the creative staff with a deeper understanding of the needs and concerns of teens that could be integrated into the new episodes of teen block programs in the coming season. The presentations and ensuing discussions, especially those involving the two principals, generated many ideas for themes and story lines.

This week there was a similar session involving the creative team from "NBA Inside Stuff" and the show's educational consultant, Dr. Istar Schwager. We distributed much of the material that had been used in the West Coast workshop, reiterated the educational themes that the show has and will continue to stress, and used a particular episode to illustrate ways in which the educational content of "Inside Stuff" could be enhanced.

I participated in both sessions, so if you have any questions about either of them, or in general about the process NBC has adopted to ensure the educational and informational content of its teen block programs, don't hesitate to give me a call.

Sincerely,

Ellen Shaw Agress

NBC TEEN BLOCK - WRITERS'/PRODUCERS' WORKSHOP

March 11, 1996

On March 11, 1996, NBC sponsored a 4 ½ hour workshop for the writers and producers of our Saturday morning teen block programs. Also in attendance were Dr. Karen Hill-Scott, the educational consultant who works with the shows, and NBC executives from the Entertainment, Research, Law and Broadcast Standards Departments. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Donna Mitroff, a specialist in media for families and children who is currently a Vice President of public television station WQED-TV. The purpose of the workshop was to provide the creative staff with a better understanding of the needs, issues and concerns of teen agers which they could integrate into the episodes of the teen block programs that are being produced for the 1996-97 season. A brief summary of the workshop appears below.

1. Requirements of the Children's Television Act. Ellen Agress from the NBC Law Department opened the session by reiterating NBC's commitment to meeting the programming requirements of the Children's Television Act and describing those requirements.
2. Research Information. Horst Stipp and Geoff Huntington of NBC Research did brief presentations on (a) teen demographics, diversity, interests, values and consumer behavior, and (b) teens viewing patterns.
3. Guidelines for Educational/Informational Programming. Karen Hill-Scott gave a presentation reaffirming her view of the key content elements of an "educational and informational" program. She also suggested strategies the writers might use to develop educational and informational content that would be accessible for teens. Dr. Hill-Scott's presentation is attached.
4. High School Principals. The group then heard from two Los Angeles high school principals, Yvonne Noble of Crenshaw High School (a large inner city school) and Ron Bauer of El Camino Real High School (a school comprised of middle class students with a large contingent of students bussed from other communities). The principals addressed the group about the key issues and concerns of the teens in their schools. Some of the issues that were raised included:
 - The importance of role models and appropriate codes of conduct
 - Ethics: playing by the rules
 - Equal application of the rules to all - consistency
 - How to resolve issues that arise in school by working within the system
 - Loyalty: to school, team, friends

- Being different; problems bussed kids have fitting in and fully participating in school
- Taking responsibility for one's actions
- Dealing with a teacher who is strict
- Uniforms/dress codes
- "Snitching" on other kids who break the rules; what is the "right" thing to do?
- Teens' sense of identity and self-worth; wanting to be loved for what they are
- Mistakes can be forgiven; one has to "pay," but not for the rest of one's life
- Cultural issues vs. academic issues: e.g., families who think their kids should work after high school, rather than go to college
- Need to feel safe at school and to know that the rules will be enforced
- Importance of keeping a teen's trust, keeping secrets

The presentations of and discussions with the principals generated many ideas for stories and themes in this season's new shows.

5. **Break-out groups.** The attendees broke into small groups to brainstorm on the issues and ideas that came up throughout the morning. In addition, each group tried to identify one or more themes or issues that could be the basis for a story line. Some of the ideas generated were: how to deal with loss (i.e., divorce, death of a loved one); drinking; racial/ethnic relationships and friendship; dealing with unfounded rumors that hurt someone's reputation; what to do when a friend breaks the rules ("snitching"); dealing with diversity (the bussed students); dealing with responsibility (a student government "judge" gets power happy); computers and their effect on teens' lives; dealing with the success of your friends; how to fight the system within the rules; sleep needs of teens.

FCC WRITERS WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

NBC

Ellen Agress
Lynn Dowling
Geoff Huntington
John Miller
Quan Phung
Tom Posivak
Robin Schwartz
Horst Stipp

TNBC Educational Consultant

Dr. Karen Hill Scott

Peter Engel Productions

Peter Engel
Linda Mancuso

SAVED BY THE BELL: THE NEW CLASS

Leslie Eberhard
Carl Kurlander
Renee Palyo
Jeffrey Sachs
Bennett Tramer

HANG TIME

Ron Solomon
Tony Soltis
Brett Dewey

FCC WRITERS WORKSHOP

GUEST PARTICIPANTS

Yvonne Noble is the principal of Crenshaw High School, a post she has held since 1986. A large inner-city high school, Crenshaw is known as a basketball powerhouse, home of the internationally-renowned Crenshaw High Gospel Choir, and a base of operations for the teen entrepreneurs, *Food from the 'Hood*. Educated at Western Washington State University (B.A. English) and Cal State Los Angeles (M.A. English), Ms. Noble has spent almost 30 years as a high school teacher, counselor, or administrator in the Los Angeles Unified School District in a wide range of settings -- from Taft High in Woodland Hills to Manual Arts and Crenshaw in the central city. She is an accreditor for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and in that capacity has served on the accrediting teams for Orange and Riverside County high schools.

Ron Bauer is the new principal at El Camino Real High School in Woodland Hills, a large West San Fernando high school comprised of middle class students with a large bussed contingent or teens from other communities of Los Angeles. Much of Mr. Bauer's 25 year career with the Los Angeles Unified School District has been spent with younger teens: 11 as a teacher and counselor in Bell Gardens and South Central Los Angeles and 3 as the Assistant Principal at Burroughs Middle School in the mid-Wilshire District. Prior to El Camino Real, Mr. Bauer was Assistant Principal at Palisades High School, a large Westside high school with a CALIFORNIA DREAMS-like student population. Mr. Bauer was educated at California State University at Los Beach (B.A. in Math and an M.A. in Educational Administration).

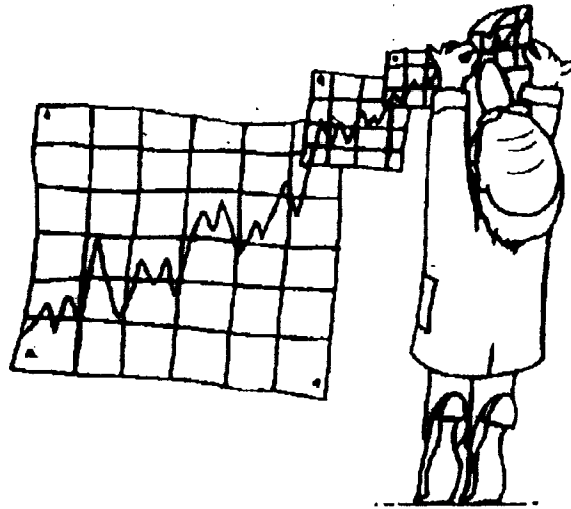
Dr. Donna Mitroff is a specialist in media for families and children. Her experience encompasses television, non-broadcast educational media, print, interactive media and themed entertainment. She has been a consultant to several of Hollywood's major children's programming organizations, and has served on national advisory committees and international children's programming juries. She has also designed and facilitated planning workshops for programmers, school districts, and community groups. Dr. Mitroff is currently the Vice President of WQED's Los Angeles responsible for management and administration of WQED's west coast productions. Her credits include NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC specials, WONDERWORKS series, FOX CUBHOUSE, JOHNSON AND FRIENDS, and FIXER UPPERS.

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION ACT of 1990

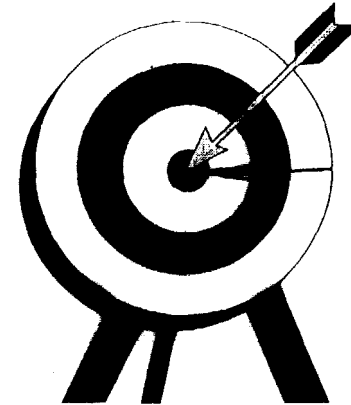
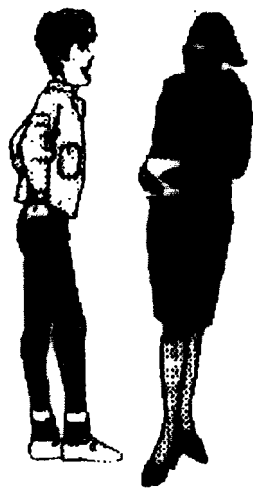
Guidelines for Educational or
Informational Programming

Karen Hill-Scott, Ed.D.,
Consultant

The content should take the viewer from one level of knowledge to a more informed or higher level of knowledge by the end of the episode.



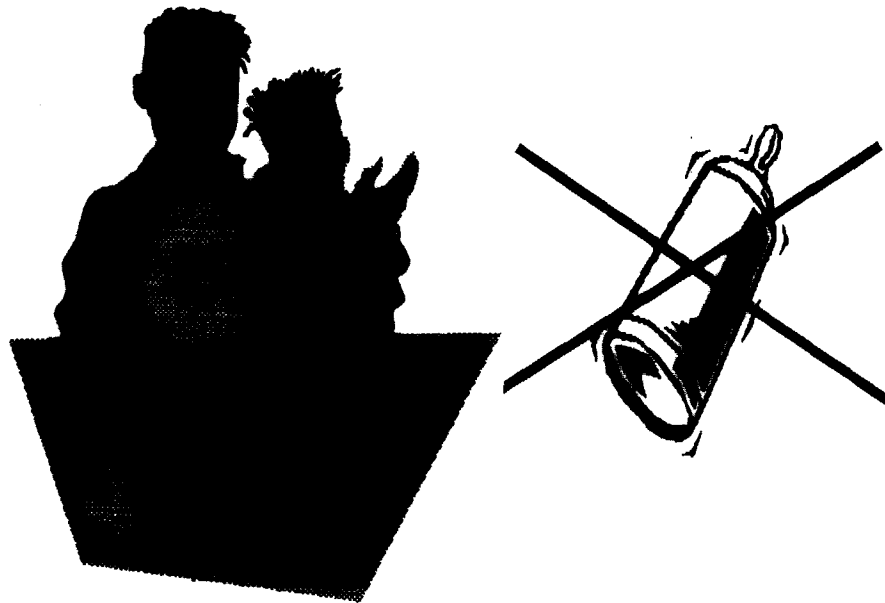
The content may fall into several categories--social, informational, emotional or intellectual--but it must be integral to the plot and present throughout the script.



The show should reach a defined audience.



The content of the show should be developmentally appropriate, for the audience which is defined.



The content should contain information which adults regard as important for children in the targeted age group(s) to know.



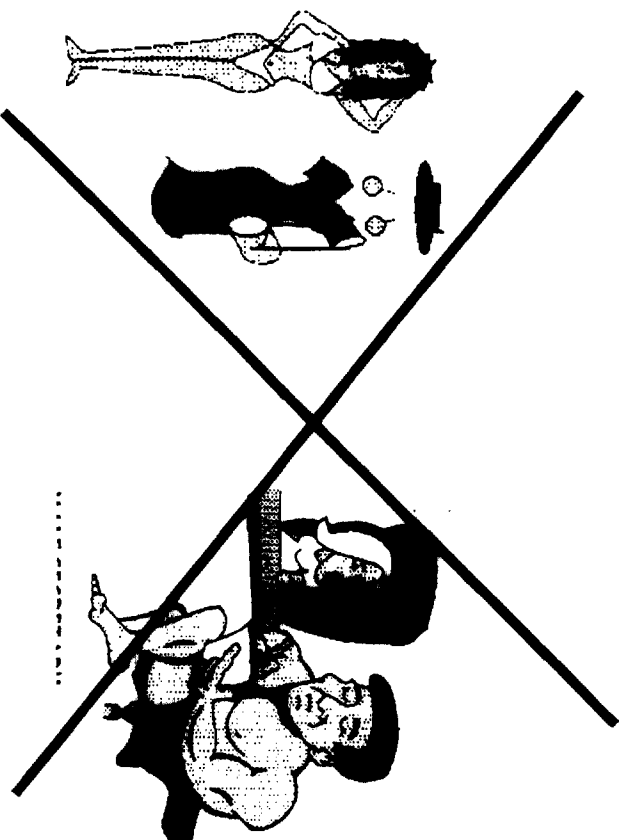
The content should have intrinsic appeal and value to children in the targeted age group(s), and/or



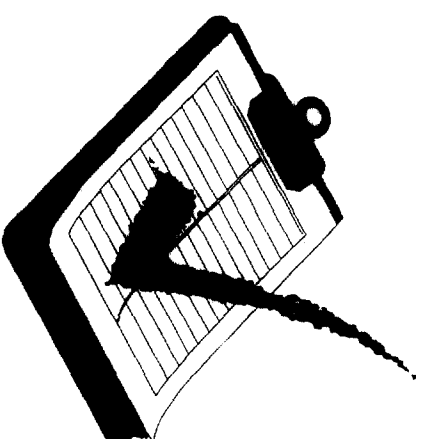
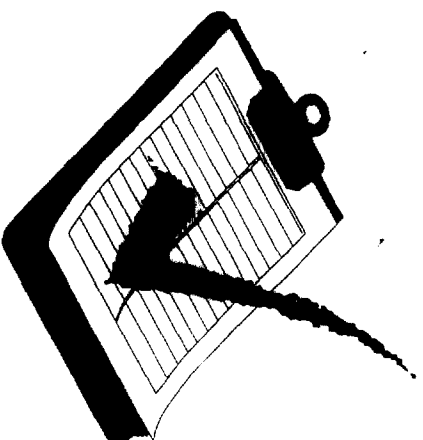
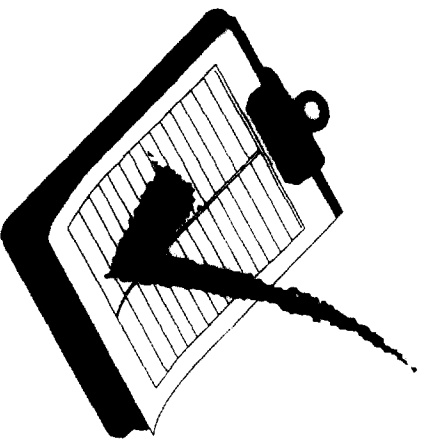
The content should be handled in a way which is appropriate to the program format (drama, comedy, reality, documentary).



The content should avoid stereotypes of males, females, racial, religious or other significant groups.



The content should be presented in a comprehensible, consistent manner.



The content should be accurate (when factual), and faithful to the character (when based on personalities).

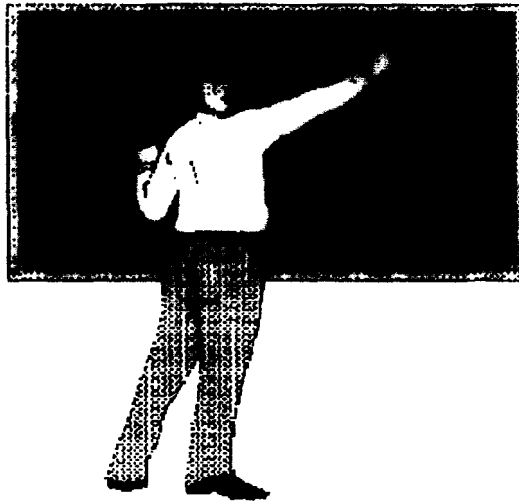


Strategies for Developing Qualifying Content

Don't worry about audience oversaturation on an **important** theme.

Some messages bear repeating.

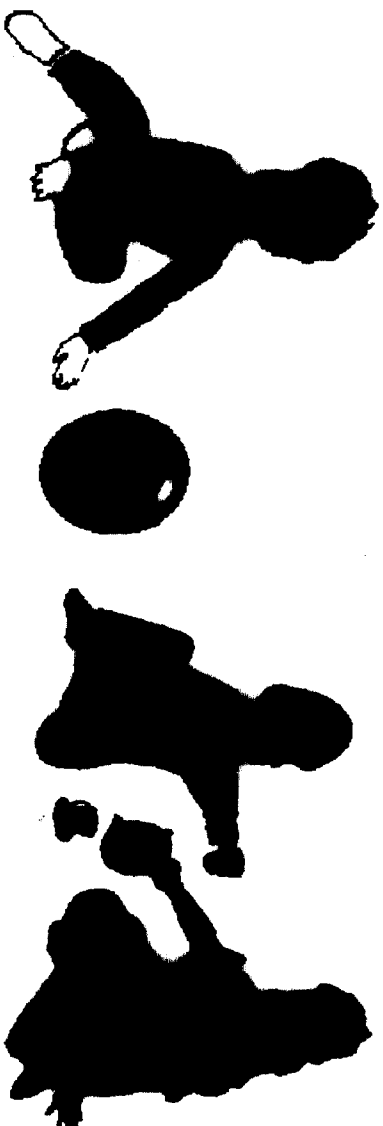
The same content can be presented in several ways over several episodes.



Avoid being superficial. Try to pack as much depth in the 30 minutes as you can.



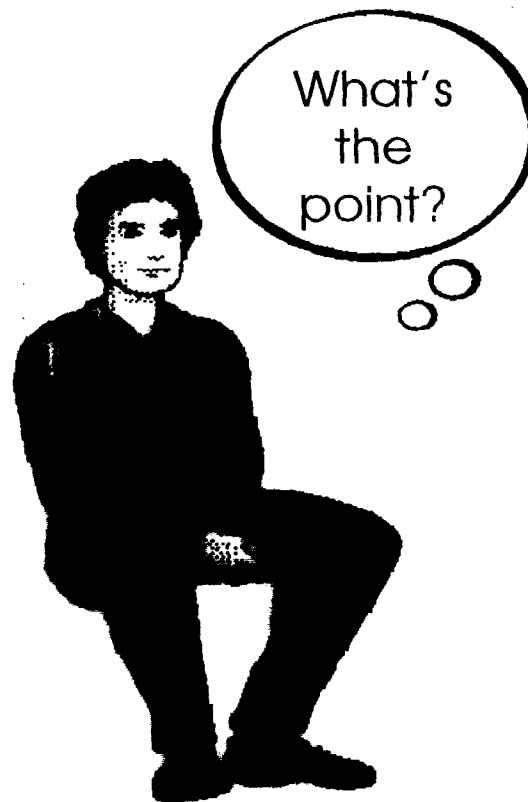
Let's get messages beyond the platitudes of
"Everything I needed to know, I learned in kindergarten."



Show and speak the reasoning process (motivation) so the audience can explore and understand what's going on and why.



Be explicit without being preachy. Don't leave comprehension of a main idea to chance.



Be plausible and realistic with plot devices that surround the message. When everything is stupid, or funny, or not very serious, the audience will not take our content seriously either.



Relationship themes are very important. But if we go there, let's deal with content, not just hormones.

